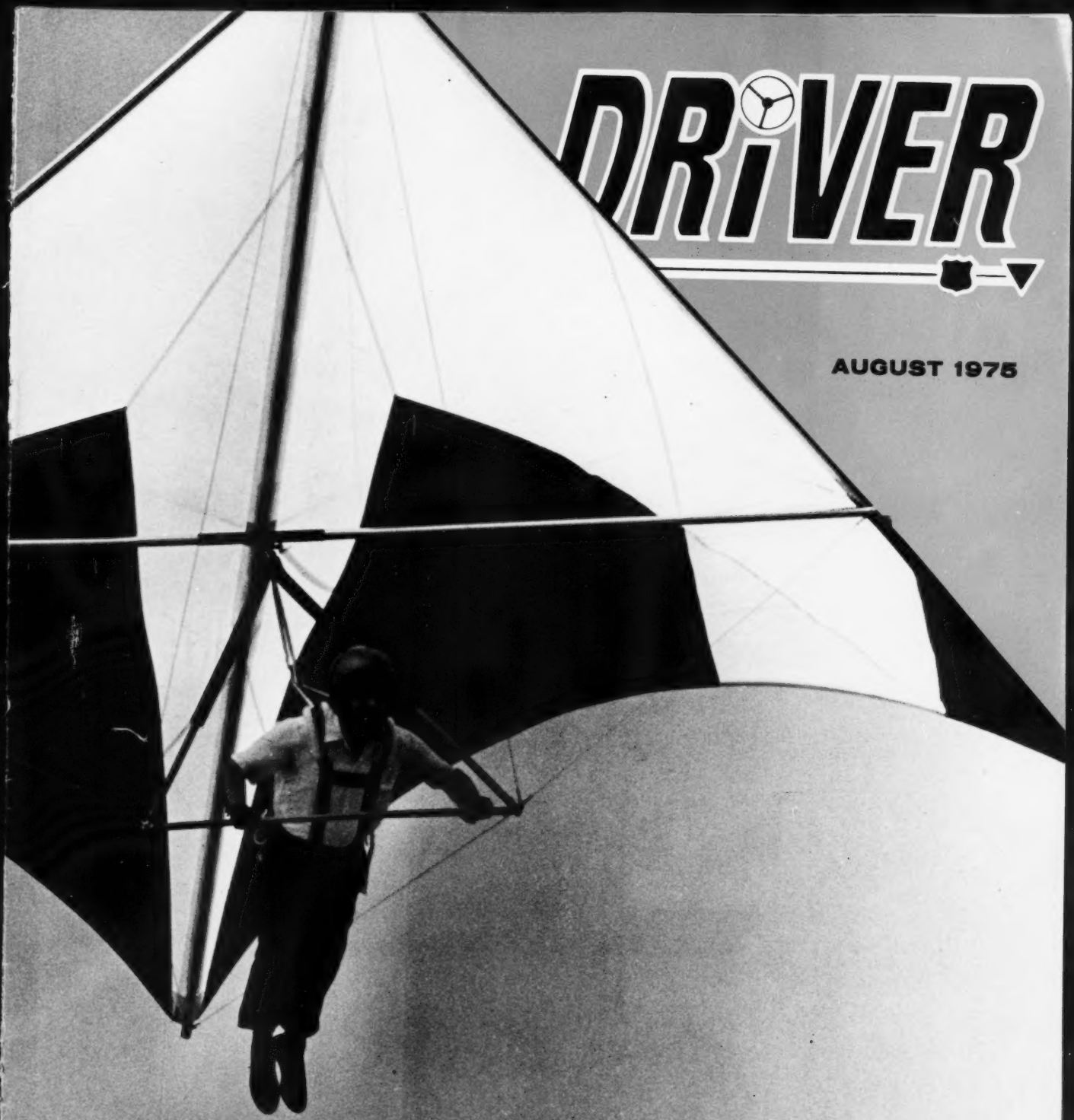
DRIVER

AUGUST 1975



GETTING THE HANG OF IT

- DRIVING IN SPAIN
- SEE AND BE SEEN DRIVING
- RIDE SAGELY

DRiVER

getting the HANG of it

Remember when you were a kid and used to climb to the top of the tallest tree in the neighborhood and dream you could fly away like a bird? Those long-ago yearnings deep in all of us must be the reason for the popularity of that exciting sport usually known as hang gliding. (We say usually because in some parts of the country it's called sky surfing, kiting, or self-soaring.)

Sailing through the air, suspended from a big, kite-like wing, provides the exhilarating sense of unpowered flight that has fascinated human beings through the ages.

continued

DRIVER

THE TRAFFIC SAFETY MAGAZINE FOR THE MILITARY DRIVER

AUGUST 1975

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 3

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Norton Air Force Base, California 92409

Lt Gen DONALD G. NUNN
The Inspector General, USAF

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Dr. FRANCIS S. McGLADE
Director of Safety
United States Army

RADM WM. ELLIS
Commander
Naval Safety Center

Capt. TOBIAS van ROSSUM DAUM
Editor

VIRGINIA HENDRIX
Managing Editor

Sgt BOB KAYS
Technical Editor

FRANCIS R. FOWLER
Feature Editor

DON KELLEHER
Art Director

MSgt BILL FOSTER
Staff Artist

MSgt MIKE KEEFE
Staff Photographer

ALICE MILKEY
Editorial Administration

AFRP 127-1

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THE EDITOR SPEAKS

DOUBLE CLUTCH

HIGH TEMPS AND CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

We've received a number of letters from you readers asking if catalytic converters in 1975 cars really will start fires as rumored. Here are the facts we now have:

■ U.S. auto makers have reported to the DOT a total of 425 instances of catalyst overheating; at least 121 of these allegedly resulted in open fires or scorched carpeting inside the car.

■ General Motors and Ford say their tests indicate that **under normal conditions,** temperatures on the skin of antismog devices are no higher than those under any other car. They say all reported cases of catalyst overheating were caused by engine malfunction, such as misfiring plugs. (A catalyst consists of platinum-coated material which reacts chemically with exhaust gas pollutants. An untuned engine emits more pollutants, forcing the catalyst to work harder and produce more heat.)

■ When a 1975 catalyst-equipped car was driven on top of a patch of wild oats, the oats burst into flame. When a 1974 car without a catalytic converter underwent a similar test, fire also resulted.

■ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is urging auto makers to install a warning system on cars with converters to alert the driver should the antismog unit overheat. They say if manufacturers fail to act voluntarily, EPA will order them to do so.

■ GSA has recommended that protective shielding be fabricated and installed on catalytic converters of 1975 government vehicles.

continued on page 19

NEXT MONTH
Getting On and Off Freeways

(above, right)
Assembling and preflighting the glider must be done before each flight. Inspect all cable fittings and turnbuckles, cotter pins, cables themselves, self-locking nuts, and all tubing, exposed and covered.

Pilot clips carabiner into glide frame for flight. Harness is much like that for parachuting. Singlepoint attachment is at the apex of the A-frame. **(Photo by Falk)**

THE GLIDER

The most popular type of hang glider is the Rogallo design, also known as a delta wing because of its roughly triangular shape. Francis Rogallo of NASA wasn't thinking of fun when he developed it. He visualized it as a means of carrying parachuting fighter pilots safely away from enemy territory.

The Rogallo design has rigid nose poles flaring out at an angle of about 90°. Slung below the wing is a simple framework from which the pilot hangs, supported in a harness similar to those used on parachutes.

The sail wing glider is similar to the Rogallo but flares out to a broader angle at the nose—from 90° to as much as 180°. This design provides more lift but makes pitch control more difficult. It also results in wider wingspans and increased structural weight.

The swing wing, invented by an engineer named Volmer Jensen, resembles a conventional glider, having a cantilevered wing with a separate tail assembly on the end of a boom. It also features a three-axis control stick that determines pitch, roll and yaw. This is too sophisticated for a beginner, of course.

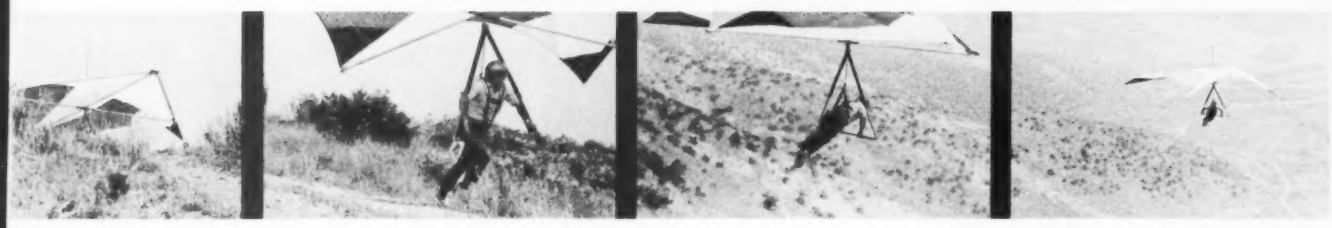
There are many versions of these basic designs around, plus other styles such as bi-wings, but most people begin with the delta wing because it is simple and stable.

The typical glider is constructed of aircraft aluminum tubing, aircraft bolts, stainless steel cable, and dacron sail. Dacron is preferred to rip-stop nylon because the nylon tends to stretch and sag, messing up the areodynamics.

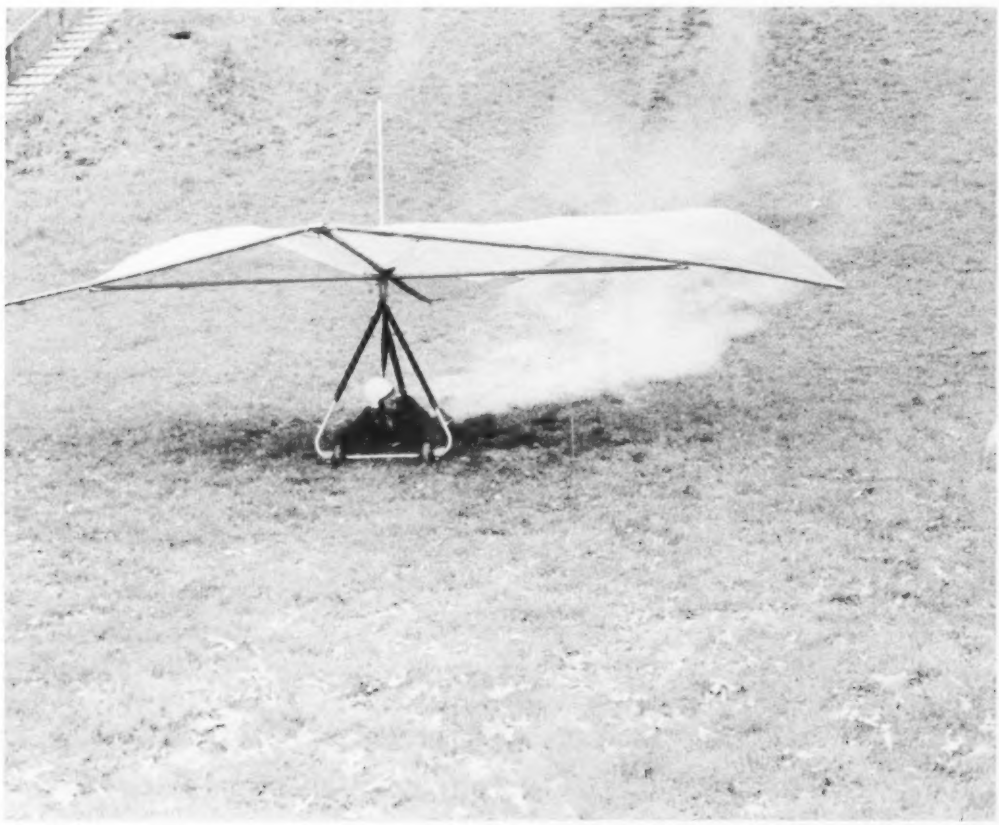
The true hang glider is carried and launched by the pilot. If it requires

continued

"On my first flight off the hill, I was scared before I took off . . . standing there holding up this awkward thing and looking down at a 100-foot drop. But as soon as you start running, the air gets under the sail, it lifts you up gracefully, and it all seems so easy." From a student on his first day. **(Photo by Falk)**



(left, below)
This school installs wheels on the A-frame base for their beginners. Wheels are not for normal landings but for times when students lose their footing and end up on their stomachs. Wheels allow one to roll along the ground instead of coming to an abrupt stop, also protects hands. **(Photos by Falk)**



"Never fly higher than you're willing to fall" is the old saying among kitemen. This harness has a seat, similar to a child's swing.

After short flights the kite is reversed to carry it back up the slope instead of disassembling it. This one weighs 30 pounds but many are heavier.
(Photo by Falk)

continued

GETTING THE HANG OF IT

any type of towing device, it's a different sport.

TECHNIQUES

The pilot's body does the work in hang gliding. Moving the body forward or backward changes pitch of the wing, tilting it up or down to gain maximum lift. Swinging the body sideways controls lateral direction, banking the wing for turns.

Winds are important to hang gliding and techniques vary according to the terrain and the strength of prevailing winds. Usually, the beginner learns to take off by running down a slope into a slight headwind, holding the kite level and then pushing out on the frame to raise the nose until the glider begins to lift off by itself. It takes a wind of five to 12 mph to become airborne and an average airspeed of 20 mph to remain aloft.

The beginner will probably stay in the air only about five to 10 seconds, although it will seem longer. After he gains some experience, he will be able to take off from bigger slopes and flights will extend to several minutes. Of course, it is possible to stay aloft for much longer but this depends on winds, skill of the pilot and his knowledge of air currents plus the ability to concentrate intently for long periods. Most people who enjoy the sport don't aim toward extremely long flights.

Landing is relatively simple. As the flight nears its end, the technique is to pull down the nose to pick up extra airspeed. This increased speed assures good stability and control during the final approach and avoids the danger of premature stalling. As the glider nears the ground, the pilot levels off to reduce speed, then pulls the nose up into a stall for a gentle touchdown.

A LOT OF WORK INVOLVED

A day spent hang gliding means a lot of time and hard work assembling and preflighting the glider and carrying it back up the hill after each flight. The breezes you are so glad to have when you're sailing are a pain in the back when you're carting the kite up for another run.

Some places have installed tows similar to the type used by snow skiers to make it a little easier to return after short flights. After longer flights, the pilot must land, disasssemble the kite, attach it to the roof of a vehicle,

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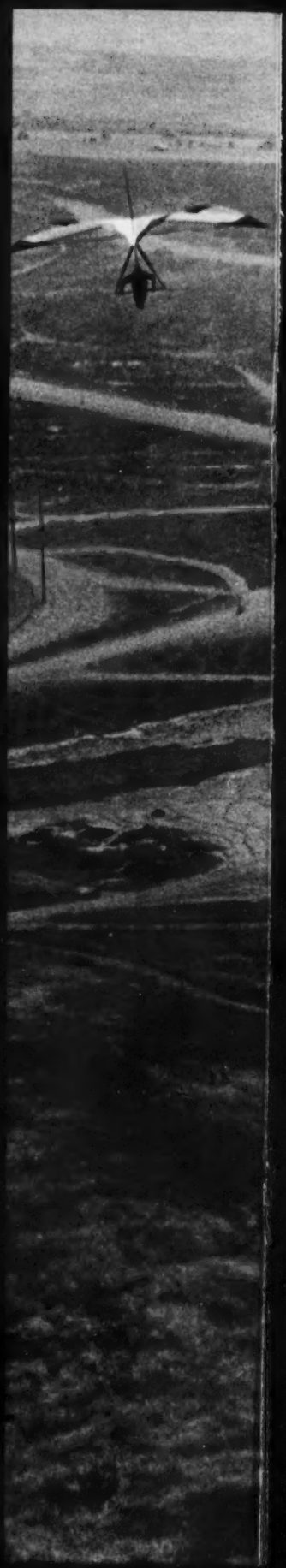


transport it up the slope, then reassemble and preflight. A two or three minute flight can involve an hour and a half of preparation time and some pretty hard work.

Assembling the glider involves attaching the A-frame (the part one hangs on to), spreading the wing tubes, and raising the king post (the vertical post on top to which the cables are attached). The cables attached to this post simply hold the sail up while not in flight. They will slacken somewhat when the weight is off them in flight. In the air it is the cables underneath that are critical since they are under tension then. Cables on top and bottom must be attached and tightened.

The preflight is an absolute must before each flight. It includes an inspection of all cable fittings and turnbuckles, cotter pins, cables themselves, self-locking nuts on the bolts, and exposed tubing. The hidden tubes inside the edges of the sail are inspected by "feel-up." The fingers are run along the tube for any dimples or bends that might weaken it.

INSTRUCTION

As with any other sport or hobby, people approach hang gliding in different ways. There are the types who first time out dive off a cliff strapped to a plastic and bamboo rig wearing nothing but their cut-offs. Not only are they taking dumb risks but they are denying themselves the chance to gain the skills that will make them really good at the sport.

Then there are the ones who look for a good instructor, are fussy about

the quality of their gliders, use harness and helmet properly, and are fully clothed to protect their skin. These are the ones who return to the slopes weekend after weekend and rarely worry about whether they are carrying their Blue Cross card.

The helmet, incidentally, is not just to save your head in case of a crash. When a kite is being moved around at the take-off area, people frequently get rapped on the noggin with wing tubes. A helmet makes this a minor matter.

If you want to try some hang gliding, by all means look for a good instructor. If you have friends who are experienced at the sport, whose judgment you trust, who have proper equipment and are honestly willing to spend the necessary time with you, that's fine. But the very best thing to do is to pay for instruction from a school or individual whose qualifications you can check out in advance.

Some of the photos here were taken at a school in northern Illinois that charges $30 for a weekend of training and furnishes all the equipment you will need. In DRIVER's local Southern California area there are clubs that will assign an experienced kite man who, for about $10 a day, will work with the beginner and won't turn him loose on his own until he's ready.

Remember that you need to know not just about the actual flying but also how to put the kite together correctly and how to preflight it.

A good instructor will impress you with the need to use a glider made of the finest quality materials. Steer well clear of people who think bamboo poles covered with patched polyethylene plastic are good enough. A good glider costs between $400 and $600. Purchasing the materials separately and building it yourself would probably bring the price down about 40%. But you don't need to own one yourself. Gliders can be rented from schools or clubs. Some schools also will let you apply the rental fee toward the purchase price later if you decide you like the sport.

HOW DANGEROUS?

Make no mistake about it: hang gliding can be a dangerous sport. Jump off into the unknown, maybe from too steep a cliff into turbulent air, and you're in trouble. Be careless about your equipment, sloppy about your preflight, and your luck will run out. Let your concentration waver or forget what the instructor told you about hanging on to the frame during a bad landing and that loud snap you hear is likely to be your arm bones.

It's no secret that people get killed hang gliding. It's a sport that is highly unforgiving of errors. But approached properly it can be as safe as a Sunday ride in the country, and a lot more fun.

(DRIVER thanks Bruce Falk of Chicago for his assistance with photos and information in this article.)

SOME INTERESTING COMMENTS ABOUT

DRIVING IN SPAIN

Interview with Torrejon AB Safety Officer **Tony Diaz**

Tony Diaz, Torrejon AB

On a visit to several of our European Air Bases, we had the good fortune to spend some time with Tony Diaz, Ground Safety Officer at Torrejon Air Base, Spain. Tony is a forceful man accomplishing a lot in the way of preventing accidents and in furthering good relations with our Spanish hosts. We thought DRIVER readers might be interested in some of his comments, and in knowing about some recent changes in Spanish traffic laws. We also obtained several comments from Commandante Roman Merino of the famous Guardia Civil.

Tony, what is the driving situation like in Spain for the serviceman?

"City traffic is becoming extremely heavy over here, with an increasing number of vehicles on the road. More and more people are buying cars and starting to drive, but as you might expect road improvments are not keeping pace.

"A lot of people in their forties and late fifties are suddenly taking up driving because they are now able to afford a car. Their experience and reflexes are limited, so you must make allowances for this in your own driving. It's different from back home where most people have been driving since they were quite young.

"There's something else a serviceman should always remember when he is driving in Spain, or elsewhere overseas. HE is the foreigner. It is their country, not his, and he must adjust his driving accordingly. For example, in Spain if you are approaching a traffic light and it turns yellow and somebody is behind you, don't stop if your way is clear—because the Spanish driver behind you is not expecting this. To him a yellow light means be careful—not stop—so it is possible you will be rear-ended.

"And when it comes to pedestrians —watch out. A lot of guys expect traffic to screech to a halt the second they put their foot in the street because this is the way it often goes in the States. But this isn't the case in Spain. In fact, if you are not in a crosswalk Spanish law considers that

continued

In Spain, or any other overseas country, **you** are the foreigner. It's up to you to know the rules, and to adjust your driving to handle what may be unexpected or different from what you are used to.

you are sort of invading the territory of the automobile, and the punishment for a driver hitting a pedestrian in such a situation is weighed with the pedestrian's responsibility to abide by the law.

"On the other hand, when you are a driver in traffic who encounters a pedestrian standing by the curb waiting to cross the street in an area without a marked crosswalk, do not stop and wait for him to go across. If you play nice guy in this situation there is a good chance the pedestrian will be struck by traffic going around your vehicle and you will be to blame. I know—it happened to me.

"Truck drivers are required by law to signal a following vehicle whether it's clear to pass (when requested this information by the following driver) who either blinks his lights or sounds his horn. But they are under no obligation to be right! So make sure to your own satisfaction that it is clear before you attempt to pass, especially a truck or other large vehicle. The indication the truck driver uses to tell you whether it is clear to pass is the left turn indicator. If it's clear he'll blink his left turn signal—if not, you won't see the signal."

What is your opinion of how our guys drive in Spain?

"Our drivers are damned good—it's just that small percentage who are yo-yos. And, if we could lick the drinking-driving problem, we'd have it made.

"There's something a lot of guys don't realize about drinking over here. Many treat sangria (the local summer drink) as if it were a light drink—some even call it a "soft drink" but it can really set you on your ear. Although there is fruit juice and soda water in it, it is also spiked with brandy. So take it easy, and space out your drinking. This is what the Spanish do and they know how to drink.

"Also, drinks in night clubs are often very strong, consisting of three to six ounces of alcohol. This is to justify the high cost of the first drink which is also a cover charge for the show. It takes just one drink of this type to put you under. So again—take it easy."

What has resulted from the rapport you maintain with the surrounding towns? Speaking Spanish fluently, as you do, must be a great advantage when it comes to dealing with local officials.

"I think it's very important at overseas bases to pay extra attention to the relationship with local authorities, and try to work closely with them because driving and drivers are a mutual problem.

"As a result of our close relationship here with the mayors of surrounding villages and police officials, I am given hazard warnings to pass on to the base personnel over the radio, and in the newspaper and bulletin. In addition I report dangerous sections of highway or the need for road signs to the highway department, which follows up on my reports. We also have no problem in obtaining Spanish police reports on accidents involving our personnel regardless of where the accident occurs throughout Spain. Our main concern is in education so that we may take measures to prevent similar accidents.

"Spain is keenly aware of the traffic problem. The emphasis is on education with radio and TV programs continually exposing their weaknesses in driving habits. Enforcement, however, is playing the lead role in accident prevention measures. The recently revised vehicle code has been a tremendous boon to us here in reducing motor vehicle accidents. The mandatory use of seat belts is really

Pedestrians—stopping in traffic for them may be a mistake. . .

doing a job on serious injuries. The rigid controls on speed have certainly reduced the loss-of-control accidents.

"The Guardia Civil are doing a terrific job on the roads and believe me they are truly our friends."

SPANISH DRIVING RULES

Some service people in Spain are not familiar with certain recently-revised driving rules that could get them into trouble if they are disregarded. For the benefit of those people, plus any others who may be driving in Spain, here are a few pointers.

- Spanish police officials are enforcing the country's mandatory seat belt law which requires the driver and each passenger in the front seat of a Spanish registered passenger vehicle to wear a seat belt. The seat belt must be shoulder or combined shoulder/lap-type seat belt—lap belts are not acceptable. The fine for not doing so is 1,000 pesetas* each; and the fine for not having seat belts installed (regardless of the year of vehicle) is 2,000 pesetas.
- Hogging the left lane on a multi-lane highway is bad news, particularly when an overtaking driver flashes the lights indicating a desire to pass. If he is forced to pass the hogging driver on the right both drivers are subject to citation. The fine for hogging the left lane and impeding traffic is 5,000 pesetas.
- When passing, make certain your turn indicators are not still blinking after your maneuver is completed. Leaving them on is misleading to other drivers. The fine for this is 500 pesetas.
- Blinding another driver with your high beams at night is a bad thing to do anywhere. In Spain you can receive up to a 2,500 peseta fine for doing this.
- When driving on the streets of Madrid at night you must use your low-beam headlights on poorly illuminated streets and only your parking lights on well illuminated streets. Violations of this rule can result in a 500 peseta fine.
- Be sure to blink your headlights on and off when approaching an intersection. This will signal approaching cars that you are about to enter the intersection and may prevent an accident.

***56 pesetas equal $1 U.S.A.**

Commandante Roman Merino Esteban of the Guardia Civil.

COMMANDANTE ROMAN MERINO

Commandante Merino is in charge of the largest and most active sector of the Guardia Civil which includes Madrid. The Guardia is similiar to state highway patrols in the U.S., but in Spain it is on a national basis. There is a great deal of prestige associated with this organiaztion which is noted for its helpfulness and politeness in all its dealings with motorists.

The Commandante told DRIVER that he thinks the average American is an excellent driver. However, when he gets into a driving-related problem it's usually because he has failed to note the change in his environment. In other words, he sometimes doesn't adjust to the accepted driving habits of those around him.

When driving anywhere, the Commandante recommends thorough preparation beforehand in the way of studying maps and asking directions. Tourists and other foreign drivers in large unfamiliar cities such as Madrid cause something of a headache when they hit their brakes in the middle of an intersection and take other abrupt actions as a result of being lost or unsure of where to go.

continued

He cautions Americans and British drivers who drink wine at noon in Spain, then drive afterwards. Even a small amount of wine can result in drowsiness and impair your driving, so it's much better to follow the Spanish custom of a noontime siesta before doing anything as demanding as driving.

Commandante Merino asks servicemen to treat his police officers with respect and courtesy. For respect and courtesy toward the driver is demanded from the officers. Only tourists or newcomers will use abusive language or attempt to buy off an officer. Fortunately this rarely happens.

We urge our readers who drive in Spain to treat these policemen with the courtesy and respect due officers of the law. The Guardia, in particular, is devoted to helping the motorist and has been known to go out of its way to tow cars which have been broken down, and assist drivers in other ways far beyond what is expected of the traffic officer.

Not all members of the Guardia speak English, so if you have any questions about a citation you receive it's wise to save them and you will have an opportunity to discuss the matter with an English-speaking official at a later time.

Figure one shows a printed statement you might receive with a warning or citation, and is another indication of the thoughtfulness of the Guardia Civil.

Fig. 1

MINISTERIO DE LA GOBERNACION

DIRECCION GENERAL DE LA JEFATURA CENTRAL DE TRAFICO

CONDUCTOR	**Acaba usted de cometer una infracción a las normas españolas de tráfico, alterando el normal desarrollo de la circulación por carretera.** Le rogamos que preste la atención debida, y observe las citadas normas, con el fin de que su conducción sea correcta, evitando así situaciones de peligro para usted y los demás usarious de la carretera. De otro modo, sus faltas pueden dar motivo a que se le denucie. Muchas gracias y buen viaje.
CONDUCTEUR	**Vous venez de commettre une infraction des règles de trafic espagnoles en altérant la marche normale de la circulation par route.** Nous vous prions de preter votre attention a ces règles et de les observer afin de circuler correctement et d'éviter des situations dangereuses pour vous et les autres usagers de la route. Dans le cas contraire, vos contraventions peuvent donner lieu à un procès verbal. Merci beaucoup et bon voyage.
DRIVER	**You have commited an infraction against the Spanish traffic regulations, altering the normal development of the traffic on the road.** We would ask you to please pay due attention and observe these regulations so that your driving may be correct, thus avoiding danger to yourself and the other road users. Otherwise, your faults may give rise to a denunciation. Many thanks and have a good journey.
FAHRER	**Sie haben soeben eine Uebertretung der spanischen Verkehrsvorschriften begangen, wodurch Sie den normalen Ablauf des Strassenverkehrs gestört haben.** Wir ersuchen Sie, diesen Vorschriften gebührend Beachtung zu schenken und dieselben einzuhalten, um richtig zu fahren und dadurch für Sie und die übrigen Strassenbenützer gefährliche Situationen zu vermeiden. Anderenfalls könnten Ihre Uebertretungen zu einer Anzeige Anlass gebn. Villen Dank und gute Reise.

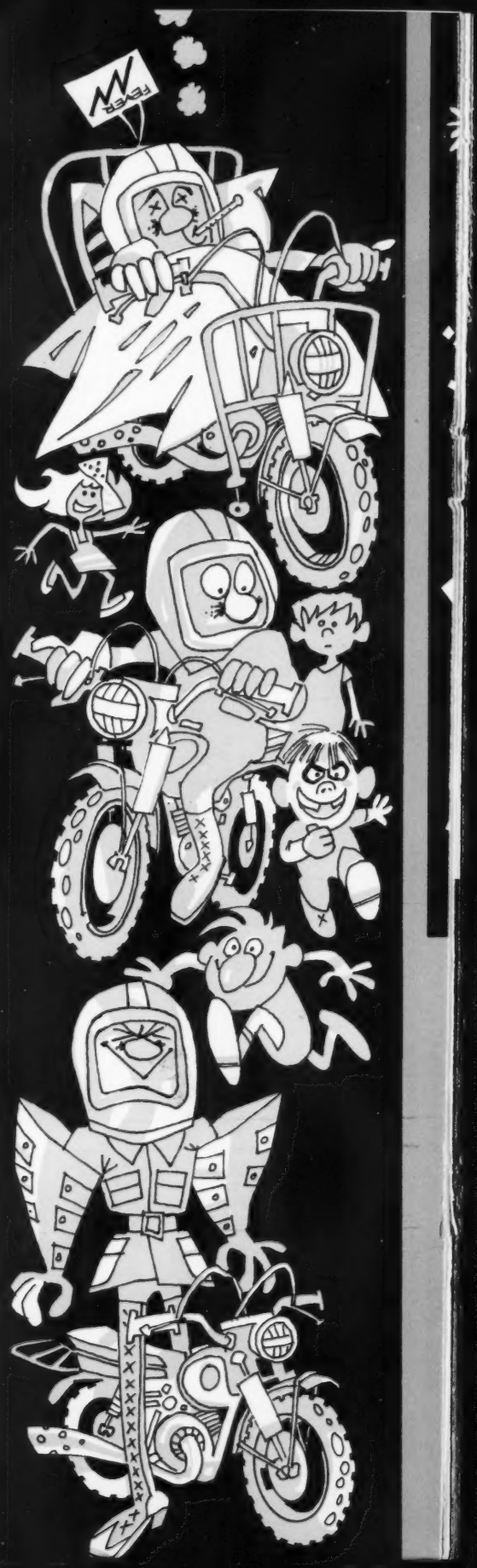
DRIVING

tip

If forced onto the shoulder of the road, allow both wheels on the same side to drop from the pavement. Then after slowing down, ease the front end back onto the pavement. Avoid jerking the steering wheel, as it can send your car to the opposite side of the pavement.

Part Two

by ROGER HULL,
Editor, ROAD RIDER Magazine



Ride SAGELY

"Rog" concludes his well-seasoned words on street riding

It's amazing how a little thing like not knowing just where you're going can get you into trouble. Always have a reasonable idea of where you're headed and how you're going to get there. Know the interstate exit you want and approach it sanely. By all means avoid that oops-there-it-is procedure of suddenly swooping across three lanes of traffic to make your exit. Plan ahead. If you're about to miss it, continue to the next one and come back. And when you do exit, bear to the inside of the curve—there's less apt to be spillage there.

The same principle applies to other roads or streets. If you miss a highway junction or an intersection, pull over and plot your next move carefully. Don't suddenly pull a U-turn or hit your brakes abruptly . . . that's apt to put you into a game of highway leapfrog which you're bound to lose.

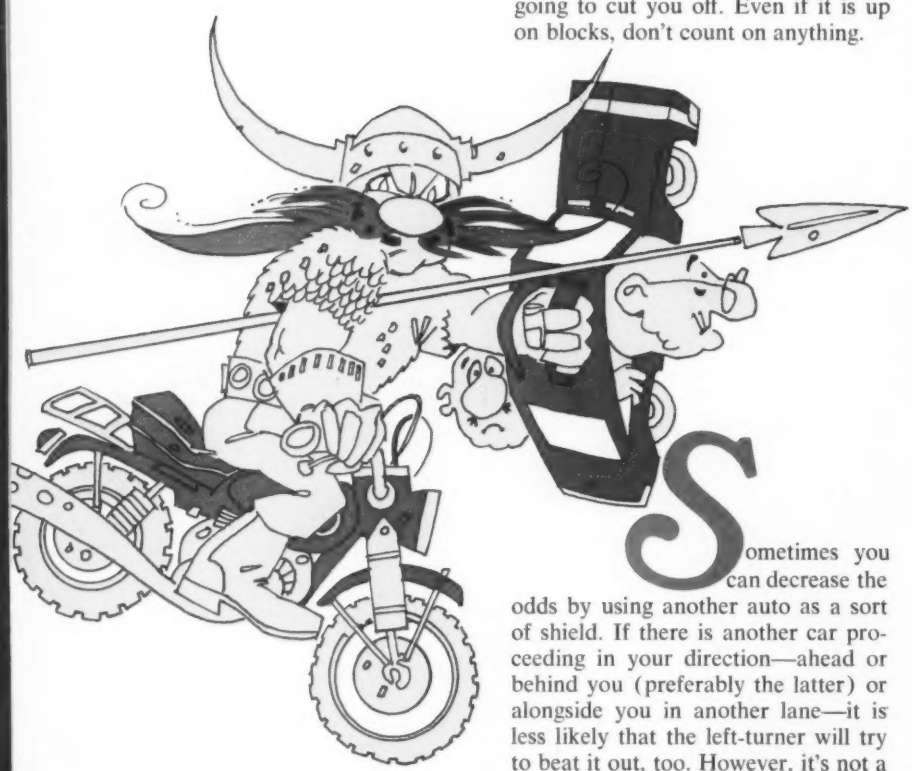
Out on the road if you see an automobile pulled over to the side, count on the driver to do something. Maybe he's pouring himself a cup of coffee or taking a map break—or maybe he's just missed something and is about to make a U-turn without checking. Always be wary of parked cars along the roadway.

City streets are more likely to be messy for you than the interstates and freeways where at least everybody is *supposed* to be going in the same direction. Generally the same precautions apply here. Where cars are parked along the curb, avoid riding too close to them. A door may suddenly open and they make lousy fairings. If a parked car contains a driver, he's preparing to get out or pull out. Here's another situation where you'll get a clue from those front wheels. A pedestrian stepping out from between parked cars or off a curb won't take kindly to a sudden ride on your handlebars.

The most dangerous spot in city traffic is the intersection (another reason why those limited access roads usually are safer). Here is where you're most apt to get into trouble and that trouble is most apt to be the notorious left-turner . . . the car will turn directly in front of you with or without signaling his intentions. If there is any place an oncoming car can turn left—intersection, driveway, shopping center—expect him to do it. Don't ever assume that a left-turner

continued

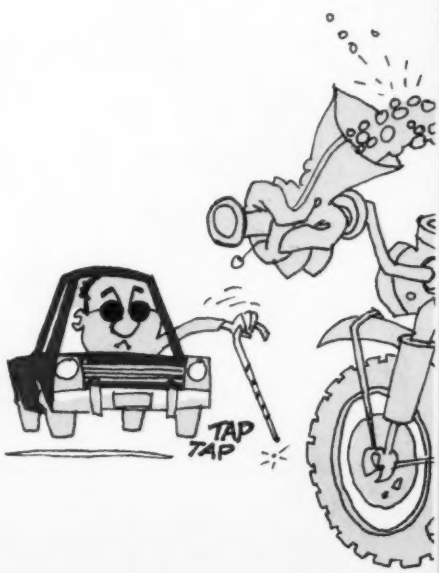
is going to wait for you to proceed—not even if the driver is out of the car and peering under its hood. Unless that car is up on blocks, figure it is going to cut you off. Even if it is up on blocks, don't count on anything.



Sometimes you can decrease the odds by using another auto as a sort of shield. If there is another car proceeding in your direction—ahead or behind you (preferably the latter) or alongside you in another lane—it is less likely that the left-turner will try to beat it out, too. However, it's not a foolproof theory!

When you stop at a red light, be sure you know what's coming up behind you. Some bikers keep the machine in gear with the front wheel aimed at an escape route—just in case. Others tend to stop closer to the center of the lane. That guy who doesn't want you to split traffic out on the freeway is more than willing to share your lane with you here . . . particularly if you're at the front of the line. Bearing toward the center discourages that—but don't make it the exact center!

Just because the light is green for you doesn't mean that somebody else is not about to run the red. Slow down and check first. Stop streets present another hazard . . . the stop-sign skipper. After all, you're just a dumb, degenerate motorcycle rider and he's in a hurry. And frequently it *is* your problem. A car properly stopped when you may have the right-of-way doesn't



mean he's decided to grant you that right. Other motorists think that S-T-O-P spells slow and that's all they do. Some interpret YIELD as referring only to four-wheel vehicles. All of these people are sure they can bluff you out. Okay, they're right. Let them bluff you. Let's face it, they're tougher than you are!

If you want to ride with your headlights on (in those states where you have a choice) and dress in bright colors with lots of reflective tape to make yourself more visible, by all means go right ahead. *But don't ever depend upon being seen!* Never assume you are 'seen' because you're flamboyantly 'visible' . . . not even if you're wearing a neon jacket and have a bonfire burning on the luggage rack. Always consider yourself *invisible* and ride accordingly. Never put yourself in the position of being dependent upon another person's reactions—or lack thereof.

Not all motorists are openly hostile to motorcycles, of course. But some drivers gain great sadistic satisfaction in cutting off, crowding or otherwise intimidating bikers. Whether that driver is drunk or sober makes little difference. His major objective is to turn you into a cardiac case . . . or worse. And the heavier the traffic, the better your odds are of encountering such a dolt. Other motorists are courteous and will grant your road rights. Don't count on it—just be pleasantly surprised when it happens—and return the favor.

Occasionally you'll encounter such animate things as dogs and other domesticated forms of life such as children. They all have minds of their own and are, therefore, all the more dangerous for it. Even the smallest dog can upset you if you hit it. Don't try to outguess it—avoid it as best you

continued

can. Usually you're probably best off to continue going wherever it was you were headed. If you're chased, speed up if you can do so safely and try to outrun it. Don't kick at pursuing dogs —you might lose control or some pants fabric. Hang on and hope.

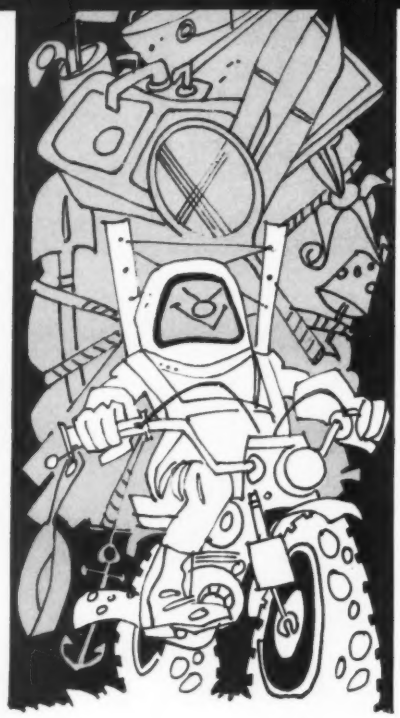
Children often follow toys (or other children) into the street unexpectedly . . . sometimes on foot and sometimes on assorted wheeled devices. You have to be extra alert for them around residential or school areas and be advised that they frequently travel in packs.

Occasionally you'll find yourself operating your motorcycle under unusual conditions—riding in foul weather, creeping through the fog, battling high winds—even riding in a group. These are subjects for articles in themselves but the major thing to remember is—alertness and caution. Always have your escape routes (more than one) in mind and ride accordingly. Keep constantly aware of what is going on around you and what is passing under you. Use caution where it is due (like railroad tracks—try to cross them at a 90-degree angle). And don't try to bluff anything—animate, inanimate or in between.

Often you can cause a change in your usual riding techniques by changing something on your bike—like adding a passenger or packing a lot of gear for a long haul. Take these factors into account in your riding habits. An inexperienced passenger who tries to help in a turn can turn you both into sudden pedestrians. Tossing all your tools, extra oil and other heavy items into one saddlebag while packing the other with a sweater and a three-day supply of potato chips is going to cause handling problems by the time you get to Phoenix or Philly or 'Frisco or wherever.

Be sure your machine is equipped with those devices you feel are necessary for your type of riding. Just what all this equipment may be is pretty much up to you, but it should include a pair of rearview mirrors of sufficient size to provide you with adequate behind-me input. Turn signals are a good idea, too.

Usually you've got your hands full of grips and levers and are unable to



hand-signal properly. But be sure you turn 'em off after you complete your turn . . . otherwise you're communicating a falsehood to other drivers who probably will think you mean it . . . and when you don't turn where they expect you to may turn out to be one of those unhappy places where X marks the spot.

Windshields, fairings, saddlebags, luggage carriers—these are up to you. If you have a cycle safari in mind, you'll want some of them (it's better than merely tying gear to the back of the bike). Be sure you use them properly . . . like correct packing of saddlebags or proper mounting of a windshield. If you have a roll bar remember that the basic purpose it serves is to protect your bike—not your legs.

Always keep up the preventive maintenance on your bike. Check it out yourself occasionally even if you're usually dependent upon a shop to do such chores. One of the advantages of keeping a clean cycle is that while you're busy polishing, you find all those little things about to go wrong. Be sure the chain (if any) is properly adjusted and oiled. Check the tire tread regularly. Be sure lug bolts and spokes are tight and taut. See if the control cables show signs of fraying. Test bolts and nuts for looseness and tighten them when they are. Give the frame the once-over for any indications of fractures or bending. Be sure you keep the oil level up and take a peek at the fluid level for those hydraulic brakes. If you stay well acquainted with your machine, you'll notice all those gradual changes which take place as it wears out . . . and eventually it will wear out.

But when it's all said and done, the most important safety device on your motorcycle is *you*. Not only should you be prepared mentally, you should stay prepared physically as well. That means staying off your cycle when you're overly tired, sick, in a lousy mood, or some other pre-disastrous state . . . such as having overindulged.

Add to that . . . protective clothing. You're smart to wear as much as you comfortably can . . . helmet, heavy boots (the higher the better), gloves, arms and legs covered (preferably with leather), some sort of face protection (either on you or on the bike). BUT—keep in mind that all that protective gear provides only limited protection. Basically it will protect you in an accident involving abrasion . . . like scooting down the asphalt without your wheels. You are never prepared for an accident involving impact . . . like splattering yourself against the side of a truck!

Just because you're forced by law to turn on your headlight in the daytime does not necessarily mean you will be "seen." Just because you must wear a helmet does not mean you are "safe". You're not! Never conclude you're absolutely safe just because you've got your skull encased in plastic. Those leathers can save you some skin but they won't prevent a broken bone. Know this and ride accordingly. Don't be misled into thinking you're legally indestructable. That's the worst kind of overconfidence.

Your major concern should be with *preventing* that accident—not merely *surviving* it. And your chances of preventing it are better than your chances of surviving it. If you're smart you'll wear protective gear and if you're *really* smart, you won't have to put it to the use for which it was intended.

In other words . . . ride sagely!

continued from page 2

Double Clutch

■ The Air Force has ordered that no vehicle with a catalytic converter be permitted to operate within 50 feet of any aircraft, fuel spill, POL area, explosives area or other potentially hazardous area.

Whether a catalyst-equipped car constitutes a greater fire hazard than other autos under normal operating conditions is still a subject for debate, but it does appear that as the 1975 models grow older and the possibility of engine malfunction increases, the fire danger also will increase.

Until a cleaner burning engine is produced, without the need for add-on devices, the converter will be with us. Such a cleaner engine is at least three years away.

Checking Ignition Timing On Motorcycle Engines

Mr. Tom Wagner, Service School Instructor for Champion's Automotive Technical Services Department in Toledo, Ohio, offers a couple of excellent procedures for checking or setting ignition timing on motorcycle engines . . . especially if you don't have a timing light or the one you own is on the blink.

Perform the tune-up as usual until you're ready to set timing, but leave the spark plugs out.

Everyone has an inexpensive transistor radio, so pick up yours, adjust it to a frequency where there is no station, turn up the volume and set it on the bike or on the ground in the immediate vicinity of the points.

With the ignition switch on, place a wrench on the bolt at the alternator rotor and turn the engine slowly. Watch the timing marks closely. When the points open, an audible "SNAP" will occur on the radio. If the snap occurs when the timing marks are aligned, the timing is correct. If not, you'll have to adjust the points and repeat the test until the snap occurs with the marks perfectly aligned.

The same adjustments can be made with the help of the horn (if you can stand the racket). Simply run a jumper wire from the points terminal to the horn. The horn will blast until the points break. Adjust the points until the horn stops just as the timing marks are perfectly aligned.

These procedures only work on battery ignition systems with conventional breaker points. Also, you must be able to lock the advance mechanism in a full advance position. These procedures will not work on CD systems.

A timing light is still the best method for making timing adjustments, but these tricks may get you out of a bind some day.

Catalytic Converters

Many of you who are going overseas have written asking what to do about the catalytic converters on '75 models where unleaded gasoline is not available. Here is the best information we now have:

■ Chrysler has an inexpensive conversion kit which enables your 1975 Plymouth, Dodge and Chrysler to be driven without the converter. When you return to the States, the converter can be reinstalled easily.

■ General Motors says their converters are adapted by simply removing the pellets from the converter. Designated GM dealers will be able to remove the pellets and put them in a container for you to store.

■ Ford suggests that you go to any dealer or good muffler shop and take with you proper proof that you are taking the car out of the U.S. They will then remove the converter and install a section of exhaust pipe so that the car can be operated on leaded gas. This is similar to the procedure for Chrysler owners except that Ford does not offer a special kit.

Remember, leaded fuel will ruin your converter so take care of this matter before the car is shipped. When the car is returned to this country, Customs will require you to post a cash bond with them before releasing your car to you. They will retain that bond until you can show proof that your car meets the emission standards. That means you will have to get the converter back in operating condition first thing.

Plug Fouling On New Cars

From time to time, Champion Spark Plug Company receives reports of severe misfiring on new cars resulting from heavy carbon deposits on the spark plugs.

Champion's investigation has revealed that this situation is most often caused by the cars being started and moved only a short distance so many times before initial delivery. Very often, the car is left idling with the choke in operation and consequently the build-up of carbon can be very heavy. During pre-delivery tests if the car is driven hard, deposit glazing may occur with resultant high speed misfiring.

Another condition, sometimes referred to as "break-in fouling," can occur in any new engine before normal oil control is achieved. Long wearing rings, modern lubricants and slow speed break-in driving all tend to lengthen wear-in periods.

Imported cars may be heavily "fogged" with preservative oil to prevent corrosion during trans-ocean shipment. They're also started and stopped dozens of times in the shipping ports and warehouses.

Proper service to these plugs should include degreasing and cleaning to remove the oil and carbon deposits. Don't forget to file and regap the electrodes prior to reinstalling the plugs.

About Miss DRIVER

(See back cover)

Twenty-four-year-old Sophie Garcia works for the California Highway Patrol as a clerk-typist, and speaks with some authority when it comes to good driving practices. She told us that reading the numerous accident reports has made her extremely aware of the importance of avoiding accidents by driving responsibly. Sophie studied for her work at San Bernardino Valley College.

Part Two

See and be Seen Driving

DON'T GET WASTED . . . MAKE THE OTHER DRIVER SEE YOU

(**Editor's Note:** This is Part Two of a two-part series on "See and Be Seen Driving." In Part One last month, we described how you as a driver can prevent a traffic accident if you PERCEIVE, RECOGNIZE, DECIDE, REACT, and EVADE it in time. Under the most ideal circumstances, however, physiologically you have a minimum of only 2.05 seconds to do this. Because these five steps primarily involve your eyes and visual capabilities, we also told how you can improve your vision and listed "29 ways to help your eyes do the driving" for you. But if the seconds ran out and an accident still appeared unavoidable, your only hope was that the other driver or pedestrian would see you and get out of your way in time. This month, in Part Two, we discuss some common sense ways to prevent being wasted by getting the other driver or pedestrian to see you first.)

The Phoenix sun was bright and warm that May afternoon as Terry hummed along astride his '71 Yamaha "650" in the inside track of a four-lane business drag. The bike's head and taillights were lit, and the speedometer needle was rocking between 30 and 35 mph.

A military dependent, Terry already had put in four hours on a part-time job and was en route to tech school for a 2 o'clock exam in electronics. His mind was mostly on the test.

Suddenly, a bluish green, four-door sedan that he had subconsciously observed idling at a parking lot exit about 60 yards ahead on his right, began pulling across the street in front of him. He was now about 35 yards away from the intruder or a fraction over two seconds from a possible collision at 35 mph—the bare minimum time, say researchers, to recognize danger, make a decision, and react.

Before reading further, look at Figure 1 and determine what you would have done if you were in the saddle.

Terry has a fuzzy picture of what actually occurred after that because it happened so fast. He didn't lay his bike down. Instead, he thinks he gunned its motor to beat out the other driver, a housewife on a shopping trip. Unfortunately, according to her subsequent statement to police, she didn't see the cycle's small profile until too late and floored the accelerator in a vain effort to get out of its path.

GOOD HELMET PAYS OFF

Terry does recall smashing head-on into the rear door of the sedan's left side and catapulting head-first over the car, scraping its vinyl roof with his leather riding boots as he plummeted into the street about 15 feet beyond. Knocked out for several minutes, he came to, cursing the pain from a bruised groin. Subconsciously checking to see if the pocket calculator looped from his jeans' belt was still in working order (miraculously, it was!), it suddenly dawned on him that his trusty brain bucket was still engaged around the old cranium. The approved safety helmet for which he'd coughed up $38.95 was badly scuffed, but he had suffered only a mild concussion and minor lacerations.

Terry spent five days in the hospital for his injuries. The lady motorist in her 40's was ticketed for not yielding the right-of-way to oncoming traffic. Her insurance covered the badly mangled bike and hospital bill. And both drivers counted their blessings, especially Terry who had been riding two-wheelers for five years without a major mishap.

True except for Terry's name, the circumstances of this accident are loaded with possible causes. Without judging the merits of Terry's reaction to the emergency, there are lessons to be learned here for every driver on the road today. Let's make it clear that while we talk about cyclists and pedestrians in much of this article, what we have to say equally concerns motor vehicle drivers. After all, there are more cars on the highways than motorcycles.

FIVE WAYS TO ATTRACT ATTENTION

First, there are five basic ways that you can attract the other guy's attention to prevent him from clobbering you. Simply use color, light, motion, sound, or size or any combination

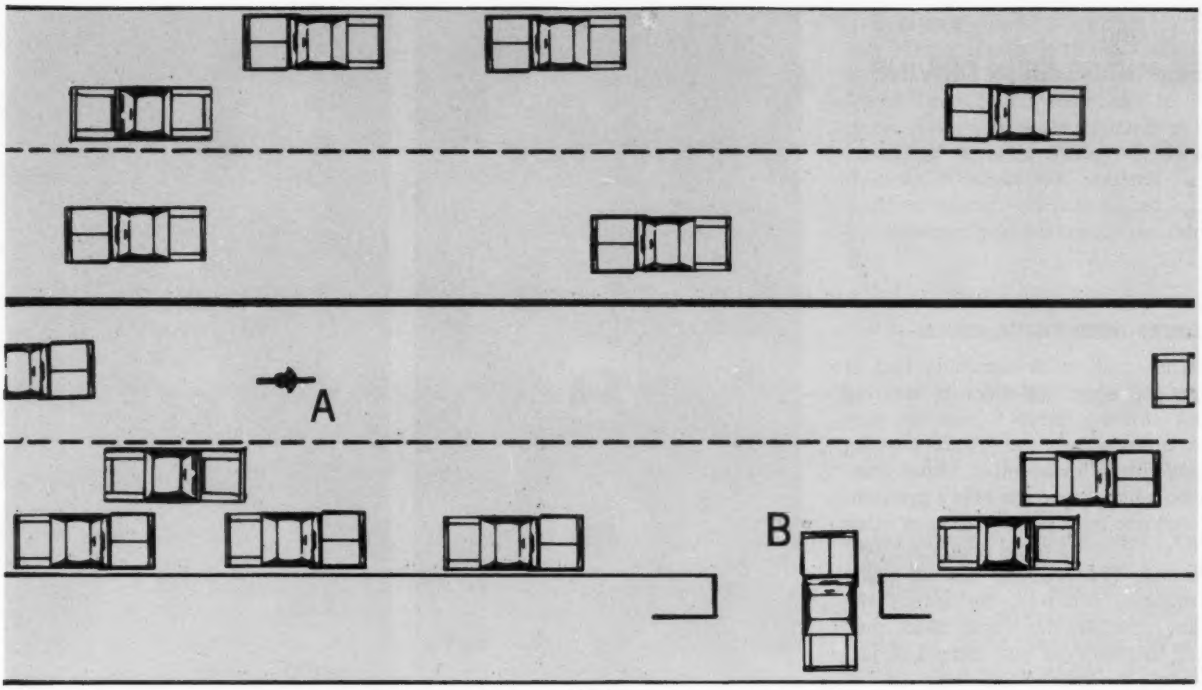


Fig. 1

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? It's a warm sunny day and you're astride a 650 cc motorcycle (A) traveling on a four-lane paved street at about 35 mph, when a motorist (B) who doesn't see you in time suddenly pulls across in front of you from a side parking lot. The vehicle is an estimated 35 yards away and at your speed you have a fraction over two seconds to make a decision and react. To compare your reaction with what actually happened, read this article.

thereof in the right amount, degree, and technique.

Last month, we went to great length to tell what you can do to see the other driver. But it's just as important that he see you. Remember the story of the motorist who refused to dim his headlights at night at the oncoming motorist who also declined to dim his? Result: Two supremely stubborn, blinded persons racing toward each other at a closing speed of well over 100 miles an hour. In this case, there was sufficient light for safety, but vengefully misuing it made it unsafe for both drivers.

Anyone who doesn't think tangling with a car is a bum deal should consider these facts. Motorcycles are involved in less than 1% of all traffic accidents, yet 3½% of the people wasted each year are on bikes. Also, if you have a run-in with a car your chances of being seriously injured are about 80%.

STATS ARE IMPRESSIVE

We could go on with stats like these all day, but they don't solve the problem—just highlight it. The reason the street rider is in so many crashes is that he is often invisible to other traffic. But he can do something about it.

The majority of motorcycle/car accidents occur in urban areas and involve a violation of the motorcyclist's right-of-way at an intersection or in a turning situation.

But most importantly, three-fourths of the accidents occur during daylight hours with good to perfect visibility conditions. The reason: The car or truck driver just doesn't see the motorcycle in about 75% of the accidents.

A lot of bikers resent the "I didn't see him" syndrome, feeling that any competent driver should be aware of every vehicle on the road. But whether the car driver *should have seen you* doesn't hold water if he has knocked you off and maybe even run over you. So, if you're really concerned about cars not turning or pulling out in front of you, it's a good idea to make yourself very visible to other motorists.

LIGHT UP AND LIVE

The best way to up your visibility on the road is to light up at all times. There's been quite a bit of controversy lately concerning the effectiveness of headlight use during daytime. However, the major bike manufacturers endorse this practice, and several recent studies have shown that riding with your lights on is the only way to go.

One such independent study found the use of a motorcycle headlight's high beam increases the bike's noticeability 142% on a bright, sunny day. This same study reported that motorcycle accidents dropped 43% in four states where mandatory headlight laws were adopted.

Lighting up will help to make you more visible. But there's another more important visibility principle many street riders overlook. This involves the relatively small size of a bike and rider compared to other vehicles on the road. Because of the bike's unfamiliar size and shape and narrow profile, motorists frequently either don't see it until too late or misjudge the position and speed of it when they do see it.

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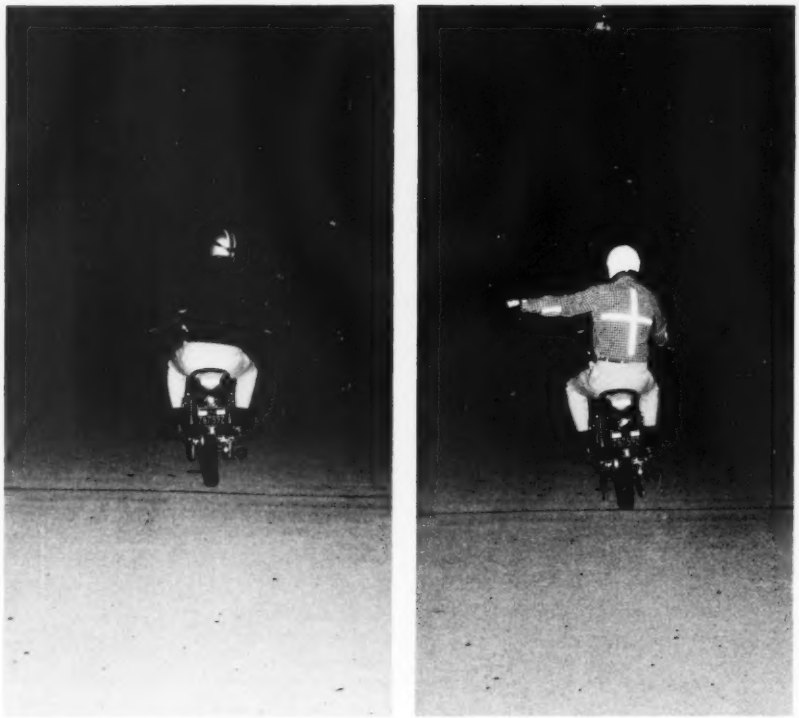

WHAT A DIFFERENCE!—Your headlights will pick out the cyclist on the right much sooner than the same rider on the left. A white helmet and a few strips of white reflective tape applied to a riding jacket and your motor make all the difference in the world. A lightweight reflective riding vest (white) will also do the job.

DRIVERS NEED VISUAL CLUES

The problem is especially bad at night or when the rider is wearing dark clothing, since a motorist may see nothing but the bike's glowing headlight. With no other visual clues to help him locate the bike's position, a motorist may still try to turn in or pull out in front of an oncoming two-wheeler. The problem can be easily overcome, however, by giving the other motorists the visual clues they need to *really* see you instead of just noticing the bike's headlights.

You can give these clues by wearing brightly colored clothes, or preferably a special reflective riding vest or jacket. High-visibility vests like road construction workers wear also work well for daytime use. These vests are available at a reasonable cost at many surplus stores and most bike and speed shops.

The important point is that riding clothes should be bright or unique in color to attract a driver's attention and to give him a larger target by which to gauge your size, position, and speed. Fluorescent colors are best, being more than twice as visible as similar nonfluorescent colors.

200 TIMES BRIGHTER

Strips of pressure-sensitive reflective sheeting are ideal for affixing to your cycle, helmet, and shoes, and also to your car. If you're a motorcyclist, bicyclist, or pedestrian, why not trim a jacket or vest and slacks with reflective fabric?

These retro-reflective materials con-

CATCHES YOUR EYE—Pretty Debra Baker, a former Miss DRIVER, has no trouble catching a guy's eye, but how about those taillights she's cleaning? Debbie knows that clean lenses refract more light more brightly, thus helping other drivers to react quicker in emergencies.

tain up to 90,000 tiny glass beads per square inch that "bounce" light back to its source regardless of the angle from which it comes. Result: An image 200 times brighter than white paint. The use of reflective materials on garments and cycles is a positive way to help reduce the number of cyclist and pedestrian nighttime deaths.

IMAGINE YOU'RE INVISIBLE

Lightweight vests are no hassle to wear and can be easily stored or stuck in a pocket when you get to where you're going. So, if you want to help reduce your chances of getting wasted, reflectorize your bike and clothing and ride with your headlights on at all times.

Everyone should know that a cyclist's skinny profile is difficult enough to distinguish in traffic, as our young friend Terry found out earlier in this story. Always imagine yourself to be "invisible" to other traffic—if you do this, you'll never put yourself in a position where your life depends on the driving performance of the other guy.

25 Ways to Help the Other Driver Avoid You

Drivers are subject to many illusions, e.g., heights and distances; road surfaces; colors; location, size, and brillance of lights and materials; lights and shadows; contrast and background; converging lines; and relative motion. You need, therefore, to consider all of these factors if you want to make yourself SEEN, IDENTIFIED, and AVOIDED by the *other driver*.

Since you can't always avoid the other driver, help him to avoid you! To that end DRIVER has compiled a list of accident-inducing conditions and a series of *do's* and *dont's* to help you save your neck—and his.

1. Whether you're a motorist, cyclist, or pedestrian, always imagine yourself to be invisible to other traffic. If you do this, you'll never put yourself in a position where your safety is dependent on the driving performance of the other person.

2. Is the weather foggy, smokey, hazey, cloudy, misty, drizzly, or dusty? Is it raining, snowing, sleeting, or hailing? Have you done everything possible to make yourself more visible under these conditions?

3. Remember the cardinal principles of contrast if you want to be seen. Dark against light (negative contrast) is easier to see than light against dark (positive contrast).

4. Consider your background—clouds, sky, trees, buildings, traffic, people, shadows, etc. Can the other driver readily distinguish you?

5. During winter driving remember that another driver may not be able to see your vehicle against the whiteness or glare of snow.

6. Is the sun shining toward the other driver's eyes or is he facing some kind of glare or reflective condition? Consider the angle of the sun and possible reflections from your vehicle as he approaches you.

7. Flashing reflections are the easiest to see. If you're a motorcyclist or bicyclist, you know how your bike bounces or vibrates according to the road surface. Because the headlight and taillight also bounce or jiggle, this condition actually is an asset to being seen sooner (if they're lighted).

8. Under good visual conditions, most nonfluorescent colors may be generally identified at an average range of one mile, but fluorescent colors are visible at more than twice that distance. On a clear, sunny day, fluorescent yellow-orange can be distinguished as such up to 443 feet and fluorescent red-orange up to 396 feet.

9. It is easier to see vehicles going away from you than coming toward you.

continued

@!!#*!+@&*!—Our sentiments exactly! Most bikers have to be constantly on the alert for drivers who for any number of reasons suddenly make illegal left turns in front of them. That's why you must make yourself as visible as possible to the other guy if you want to be both alive and right.

SEE THE CYCLIST?—Although these are black-and-white photos, they easily illustrate how difficult it is to distinguish the small profiles of most two-wheelers, especially against congested backgrounds like in pictures above and right. Headlights turned on and reflective white helmets help us to spot them, but the riders must still drive defensively as if we don't see them. Note combination of restricted vision factors in center photo (blind spot in car driver's right eye, his nose, car window post, small cycle profile, large truck, and possible glare from side of semi-trailer) which may completely hide the biker until the car driver suddenly starts to pull across in front of him.

continued

SEE AND BE SEEN DRIVING

10. If you want the other driver to see you in heavy rain, fog, sleet, snow, dust, or other vision-inhibiting condition, use fog lights if you have them. Don't use them for normal night driving. Be certain that your headlights also are turned on (legally required in most states).

11. Increased conspicuity of you and your vehicle can be achieved in many ways. The two most common are by paint and by light. The use of paint, in general, falls into two categories—functional and aesthetic. Functionally, probably the most basic use of paint is for surface protection; second, for conspicuity. Unfortunately, in choosing a new vehicle, most buyers put a pleasing external appearance ahead of conspicuity and therefore overlook this important extra measure of safety. Actually, with the many modern fluorescent automotive paints available today, it's relatively easy to select a color both functionally and aesthetically harmonious, either for your new or old set of wheels.

12. Larger vehicles are easier to see but are less maneuverable; smaller vehicles such as motorcycles are more difficult to distinguish but have less bulk to maneuver.

13. If you want to add a little variety or pizazz to your vehicle's paint job, consider decorating it with some of the many fluorescent-colored goodies like racing stripes, flames, flowers, or racing product insignias. They do attract attention.

14. Keep your headlight, taillights, and reflectors clean (sponge or wipe them off every time you gas up) so other drivers can see you at greater, safer distances. Normal road dust and scum reduce their effectiveness by as much as 50%.

15. A clean, polished car, regardless of color, can be seen more quickly and easily. Wash and polish your vehicle regularly.

16. Use your headlights for daytime driving. Even in bright sunlight, studies show that the noticeability of your vehicle is increased by 142%. More and more cross-country trucking companies are requiring drivers to roll their rigs with both head and taillights on, day and night. Major transcontinental bus operators also are doing it.

17. In driving at night, flick and dim your headlights—several times if necessary—in plenty of time and distance (as much as a mile) and hope the other driver will also dim his. Re-

continued

RECOGNITION DISTANCE BY COLOR

	Clear—Sunny Day
Fluorescent Yellow-Orange	443 ft
Fluorescent Red-Orange	396
White	338
Yellow	319
International Orange	242
Red	187

(below)
WHAT IS IT?—Whatever it is that your headlights have suddenly picked up in the inky blackness of night, you've seen it in time to avoid hitting it. IT is a pedestrian who, although on the wrong side of the road, still understands the "Be Seen" half of "See and Be Seen Driving." If you do much walking after dark, why not apply a few strips of white reflective tape to a jacket and to the backs of a pair of walking shoes?

GHOST RIDER?—No, just a cyclist with foresight to protect himself and others with reflective materials when riding at night. Strips of pressure-sensitive reflective sheeting are affixed to his cycle and helmet, while his clothes are trimmed with reflective fabric. Containing thousands of tiny glass beads per square inch, these materials make his image 200 times brighter at night than white paint.

continued

SEE AND BE SEEN DRIVING

member, it is estimated that one out of every four drivers on the road at night has been drinking, and it's well worth a few extra blinks of your beams to wake up a drowsy driver.

18. Don't hesitate to honk your horn to attract another driver's or pedestrian's attention to a hazardous situation. Diesel truck drivers frequently sound a blast on their air horns with immediate, generally positive results.

19. In case of a roadside emergency, post flares, emergency reflectors, or some type of lighting device to warn other motorists of your vehicle's position. Flasher type lights or someone waving a flashlight is best.

20. Next to a flashing light source or spectral reflecting device, motion is your best attention getter. Most cyclists, particularly bicyclists, know the value of a fluorescent-colored pennant waving from a long safety wand or "swizzle stick." Autoists can achieve the same effect by attaching a pennant to a radio aerial or affixing their own wand to a rear bumper. One Air Force scientist states, "Motion is the most important factor in visual perception in conditions of low color, tone, and shape contrast."

21. Pedestrians not only should wear light-colored clothing at night, they should also wear a reflectorized vest or jacket. Better yet are easy-to-carry wristlets of reflectorized material which attract a motorist's attention as you move your arms.

22. When walking along the side of a road with children, make certain they also have light-colored garments, reflectorized wristlets if possible, and that they walk on the outside because they are smaller and more difficult to see.

23. All new bicycles sold in the United States since January 1, 1975 come equipped with front headlights and pedal, wheel, and tail reflectors. By January 1, 1976, federal law will require all bicycles to be so equipped.

24. To reduce your chances of an accident, do as much of your driving as possible during daylight hours, not during dawn or dusk or inclement weather, and not after 11 p.m. when the number of intoxicated and fatigued drivers on highways starts increasing sharply.

25. Finally, keep your vehicle's engine well tuned and good rubber on all wheels to "dig out" in a hurry if another driver heads toward you.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BACKFIRE

MANDATORY HELMET LAWS

I have never written a letter to the editor in my life, but after reading RM3 McCusker's in your column in May, I feel I have to. I have been riding and building motorcycles for 17 years, both on and off road. I am in favor of some legislation governing motorcycle safety, but the mandatory helmet law McCusker would like to see is about the most disgusting bane placed upon me and my brothers (in the name of safety) I have ever had the misfortune to encounter.

To begin with, the people that back his law are not interested in motorcycling safety but in selling and making a profit from mandatory sale of helmets. For what little safety the helmet may provide the rider (which is questionable) the helmet obscures vision, impairs hearing, is uncomfortable on a long haul, and is extra weight on your head that slows down your reflexes and helps to snap your neck in

the event of an accident even if you don't hit your head.

If a person believes in the helmet, he should wear one whenever he wants to, but don't infringe on my freedom of choice by making me wear a polyethelene killer for my own good against my will.

Brian H. Ramsey
EN1(SS), USN
FMAG, Naval Air Station
Norfolk, VA 23511

The protection provided by a helmet is not questionable; it is proved beyond doubt. The idea that helmets cause broken necks comes from a widespread but erroneous interpretation of New York statistics. Medical doctors and traffic experts alike say that without the helmets, these deaths would probably have resulted from head injuries instead. We heard this directly from doctors who studied the cases, when we attended the Third International Congress on Automotive Safety last summer.

Whether mandatory helmet laws encroach on your personal freedom is a completely different question. Every cyclist we know, amateur and pro, favors helmet use but many are loud in their opposition to a law requiring it.

A helmet does restrict vision slightly, but the good rider moves his head to scan traffic anyway. In most traffic situations, engine and wind noise are such that a helmet does not further impair hearing.

No safety equipment can make you invulnerable in an accident-involving impact. If there is any danger in the helmet, it is that the motorcyclist may feel it gives him a license to ignore the basic principles of safe riding.

FASHIONABLE HAZARDS

Enjoyed the articles in the May issue, especially the good information on tires.

The bicycle riding tips on the back cover are well worth noting also. However I can't resist adding one more after looking at the picture of

Miss DRIVER: Do not ride a bicycle barefooted or with sandals. Anyone who has ever gotten a bare toe into a moving bicycle wheel will back me up on this.

Richard L. Carney
Major, USA
Ft Huachuca, AZ 85613

This is just one of several dozen letters we got about Melody's choice of footwear for bicycling. Our photographers try to watch this sort of thing but sometimes it gets by. Melody herself says she wore those shoes for the photo because they were fashionable and pretty but that she would never wear them for biking because they are not only unsafe but uncomfortable.

BUYING A CAR IN EUROPE

SSG Mike Whitfield's letter (April) about buying a car in Europe was not entirely correct. By purchasing an automobile through the Canadian Forces Exchange System in Germany, a flat administrative fee of Deutsch Mark 100 is charged. As the dollar/DM exchange rate can fluctuate drastically (DM 2.32 to one dollar on 23 May), DM 100 can range from $35 to $50.

The tax savings as stated in SSG Whitfield's letter are 11% and represent an added value tax imposed by the German government. By purchasing an auto from outside Germany

continued

(France, for instance), the buyer can deal directly with the factory or may receive service from a dealer in Germany for a flat fee paid by the factory to the dealer. No payment is made directly to the dealer.

Again, as SSG Whitfield says, an AE Form 2075 can be obtained from the USAREUR Military Police for importing an automobile to Germany. The MP unit to be contacted is the 42d Military Police Group (Custom), APO NY 09086.

Thanks for a highly informative magazine.

Peter H. Renner
ODCSCOMPT
HQ USAREUR & 7A
APO New York 09403

SMOTHER THE FIRE

The article "How to Select a Fire Extinguisher" (March) was very informative. However, a word of caution in the use of dry chemicals which release CO_2 should have been included.

In a recent incident at one of our bases, a housewife threw baking soda on a fire in her deep fryer. The ensuing violent release of CO_2 frothed and spattered the fat, burning the woman, spread the fire, and caused extensive damage that wouldn't have occurred if she had smothered the fire with the pot lid instead.

CWO R. L. Kuntz
731 Communication Sq
Canadian Forces Base Shilo
Shilo, Manitoba

MOTORCYCLE LAWS CHART

Reference the chart of motorcycle state law requirements in the May issue, the chart shows Nebraska as having enacted a helmet law. This is incorrect. The Nebraska unicameral has tried unsuccessfully since 1971 to enact such laws. Strong lobbying and cyclist demonstrations have defeated each attempt to enact a helmet law in Nebraska.

Thomas G. Murphy
MSgt, USAF
Ground Safety Superintendent
Offutt AFB, NE 68113

Our apologies to readers concerning this and numerous other errors in the referenced chart. We reprinted it with permission from a well-known newsstand publication with a fine reputation for accuracy. The chart wasn't up to their standards or ours. We now have an absolutely correct chart from the Department of Transporation but have decided against publishing it because these laws are changing so fast there would be errors in it by the time it reached you. If you are motorcycling away from your home state, take a minute and check the requirements for yourself. A phone call or postage stamp can save you a traffic citation.

APPLAUSE

I know you must get letters such as this from all over the world. However, the men and I of this squadron wanted you all to know how much we appreciate your magazine and all the useful articles and tips. Here in the Eiffel Mountains of Germany, believe me, any and all tips are welcome.

Again, thanks for a great magazine and keep up the world of good you are doing for your reading audience.

J. B. Butler
Capt, USAF
7007 Explosive Ordnance
Disposal Flight
APO New York 09123

Thank you. There's no such thing as too many letters like yours.

RADIAL TUNED SUSPENSIONS

As you probably know, several manufacturers offer radial-tuned suspension as an option on 1975 automobiles.

I would like to know the difference between radial and regular suspension. Could you give the details and what I would need to do to change my present antomobile suspension to radial suspension?

Greg Grillette, AQ2
Work Center 630
Aircraft Maintenance
NAS Dallas, TX 75200

"Radial-tuned suspension" means minor alterations have been made in the toe, camber, and caster adjustments and to the spring angles. These adjustments are not significant enough to warrant converting the suspension on an older car if you're planning to install radials. Radials are compatible on just about any older car as long as the suspension system is in good condition. You may experience a slightly harsher ride than with conventional tires. Many tire companies recommend changing the standard suspension setting slightly to accommodate radials on an older car. For instance, a zero toe setting reduces side scuff and improves the ride. A good tire shop can recommend what readjustments, if any, your particular car should have to provide the best performance with radials. Remember: don't mix radials with any other tire type.

Address your letters to:
Editor
DRIVER Magazine
AFISC/SEDD
Norton AFB CA 92409

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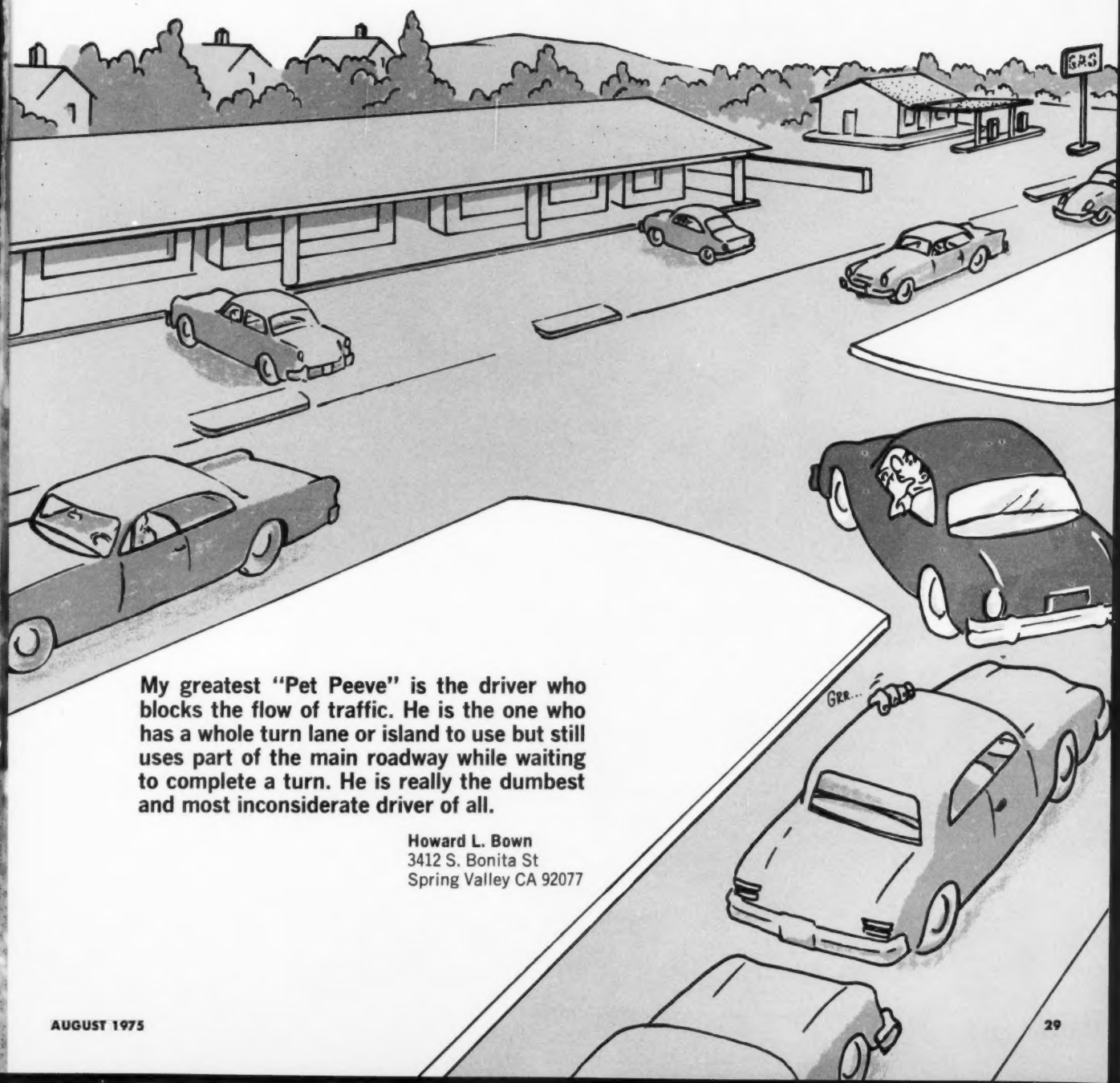
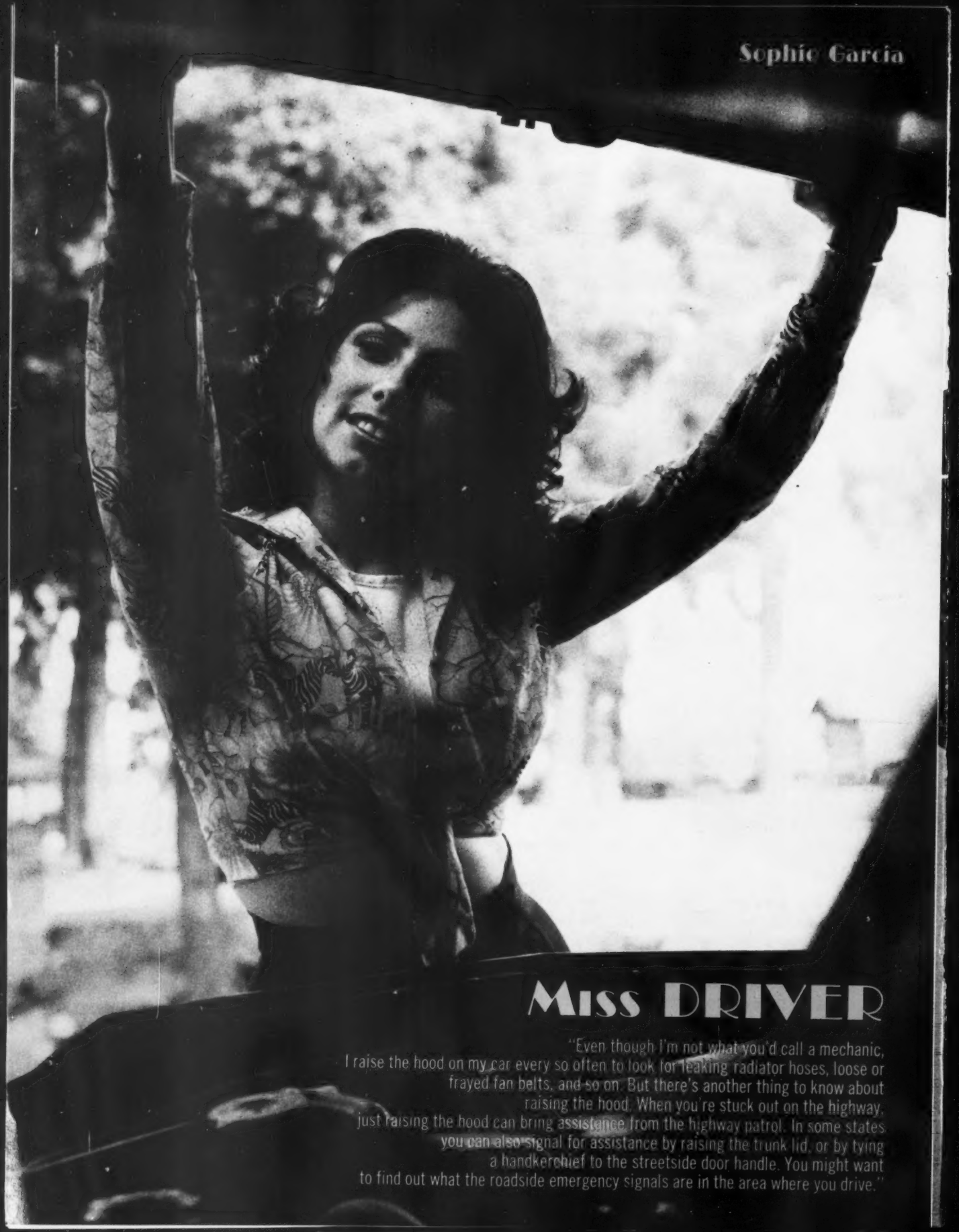
TUNEUP

pet peeve



My greatest "Pet Peeve" is the driver who blocks the flow of traffic. He is the one who has a whole turn lane or island to use but still uses part of the main roadway while waiting to complete a turn. He is really the dumbest and most inconsiderate driver of all.

Howard L. Bown
3412 S. Bonita St
Spring Valley CA 92077



Miss DRIVER

"Even though I'm not what you'd call a mechanic, I raise the hood on my car every so often to look for leaking radiator hoses, loose or frayed fan belts, and so on. But there's another thing to know about raising the hood. When you're stuck out on the highway, just raising the hood can bring assistance from the highway patrol. In some states you can also signal for assistance by raising the trunk lid, or by tying a handkerchief to the streetside door handle. You might want to find out what the roadside emergency signals are in the area where you drive."